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JANUARY 2016

EASY GLAM
SHINE IN GOLD, SEQUINS & LEATHER

MILEY CYRUS
On the joy of not caring what people think

DOSSIER
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(We've gone all Charlotte Church)

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The Miley show
Once a wild child, always a wild child? If it means giving girls and women a voice, then Miley Cyrus has no plans to tone things down. From social activism to championing being gender fluid, America's most controversial pop star is fast becoming the country's most unconventional role model...
Styling by CATHERINE NEWELL-HANSON Words by ALLISON GLOCK

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WATCHING CHILD STARS GROW up is rarely a pretty thing. As a mum, I can't begin to imagine how they or their families deal with the highs of success and the lows of navigating their teen years and adulthood in the full glare of the media. How refreshing it is then to read our interview with cover star Miley Cyrus, who, at just 23, seems to be completely clued up about who she is, what she wants in life, and how she plans to put all that fame and money to good use (page 128). Having watched her as the wholesome country gal Hannah Montana (a welcome 20-minute pit stop in the daily head-bashing sessions my twins used to entertain themselves with), it's quite something to see how she's transformed into a thoroughly modern woman who's talented, funny, unafraid to say what she thinks and has an uncanny ability to stay one step ahead of the media and the zeitgeist (gender fluidity – she's already there). I'm a fan.

Just like buses, we have not one, but two former child stars in this issue. Like Miley, Charlotte Church isn't afraid to speak her mind, and this year she made the headlines by campaigning against the government's austerity measures. She explains why taking a stand on the issue is so important to her in our dossier on activism (page 96). And if you're feeling particularly passionate/angry/excited by something happening in your community or across the country, we have lots of great advice on everything from making a campaign go viral to starting your very own political party.

As 2015 draws to a close, it feels like we're living in a different political landscape to anything we could have imagined at the start of the year (Jeremy who?). In our annual news round-up on page 74, we look back on the events, trends, people and places that made us laugh, cry or choke on our avocado on toast at breakfast. Let's hope that 2016 is just as memorable – for all the right reasons.

Trish

Trish Halpin, Editor in Chief

Tweet me @TrishHalpin

WHAT WE'RE LUSTING AFTER THIS MONTH

Abi
Senior fashion assistant

Bag, **£199**, Luisa Cerano

'Stylish yet practical, this tote is perfect for my daily essentials.'

Tanya
Executive fashion director

Scarf, **£245**, Kit and Ace

Lucia
Fashion editor

Watch, **£179**, Thomas Sabo

'New year = new watch. I'm upgrading my arm candy with this glam number.'

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID NEWBY. STYLED BY HOLLY WELCH. STILL LIFES BY NOHALIDEDIGITAL

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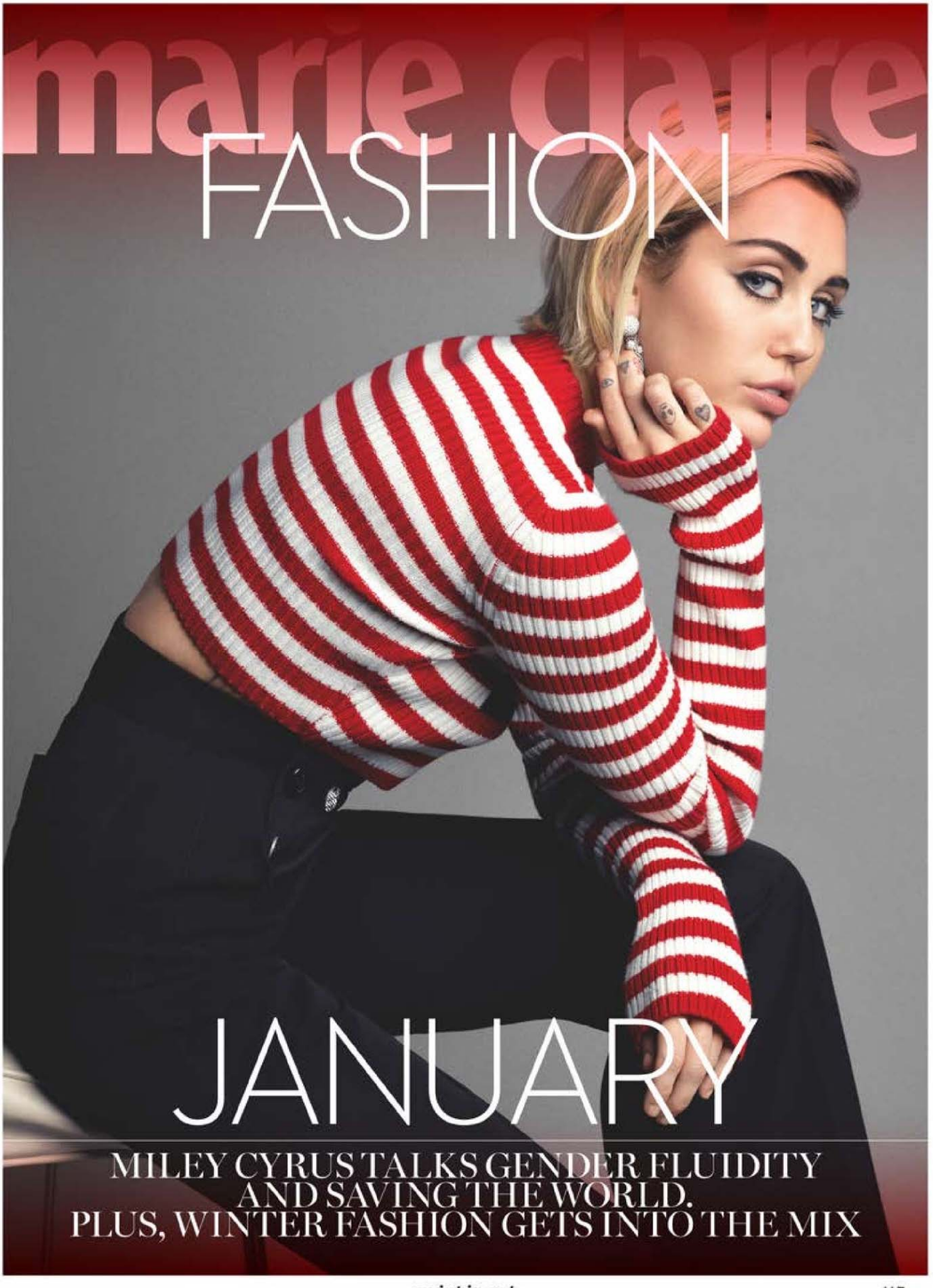
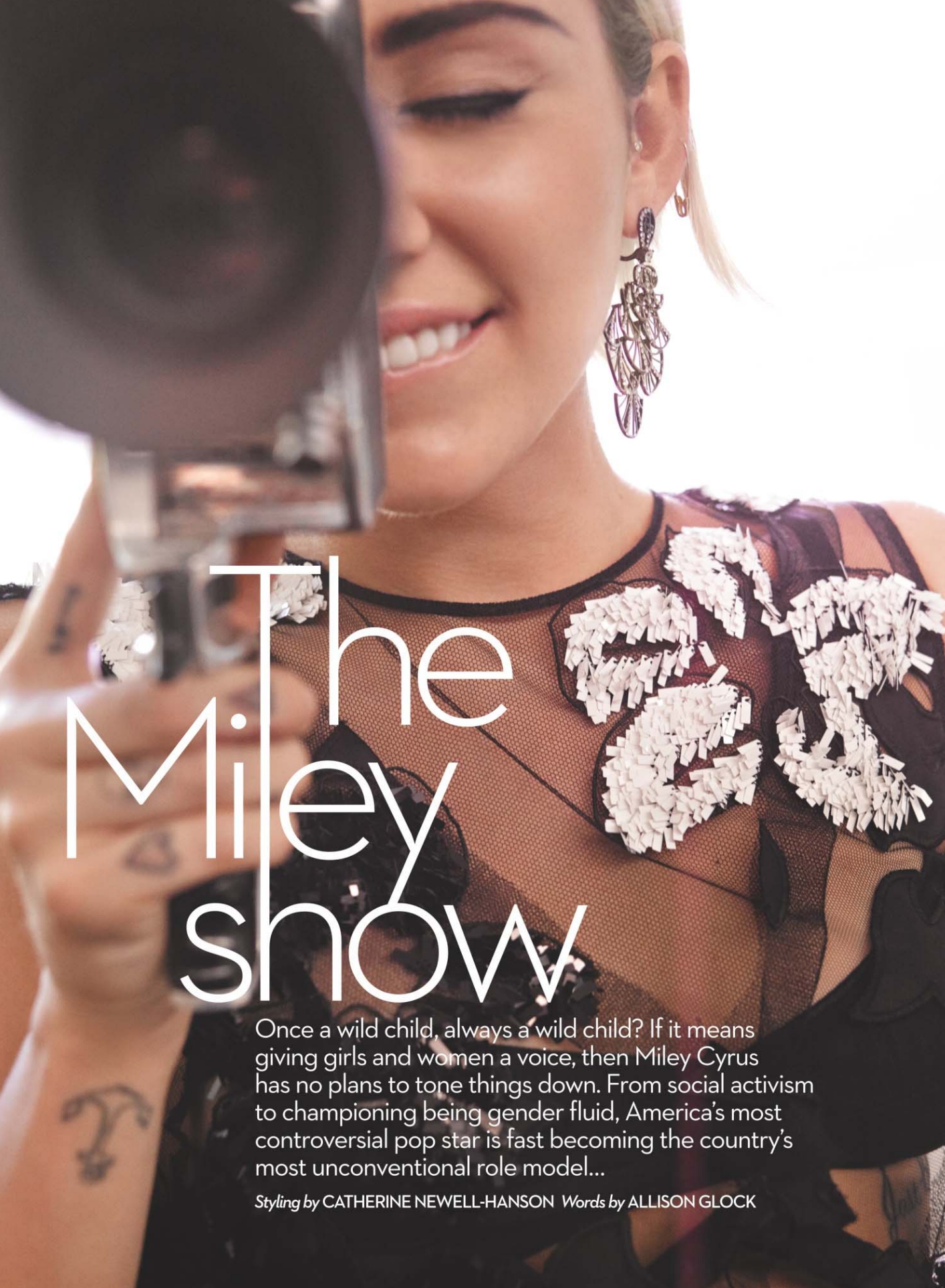


JANUARY

MILEY CYRUS TALKS GENDER FLUIDITY AND SAVING THE WORLD. PLUS, WINTER FASHION GETS INTO THE MIX

STYLED BY CATHERINE NEWELL-HANSON. SWEATER, MARC JACOBS; TROUSERS, MARC JACOBS; EARRINGS, DE GRISOGONO



The Miley show

Once a wild child, always a wild child? If it means giving girls and women a voice, then Miley Cyrus has no plans to tone things down. From social activism to championing being gender fluid, America's most controversial pop star is fast becoming the country's most unconventional role model...

Styling by CATHERINE NEWELL-HANSON *Words by* ALLISON GLOCK

DECCA

A HANDMADE 'GOOD VIBES ONLY' BANNER PROVIDES a cheery welcome when entering Miley Cyrus's recording studio, a cosy space adjacent to her home in LA's San Fernando Valley, furnished with an inviting couch, cluttered work desk and hanging light fixtures that resemble clouds. The coffee table boasts photo books, an ashtray, doodle pads, a bottle of Cîroc, stickers, Polaroids and a sculpture of a brain. Her microphone is wrapped in rainbow tape, and a blow-up plastic alien doll leans in the corner.

Cyrus, 23, is proud of her unpretentious, low-tech studio. A country girl at heart, she is not a big believer in conspicuous consumption or unnecessary excess – at least not outside the emotional or theatrical realm. 'These big fucking studios other people put in?' she says of some of her colleagues. 'You don't need that stuff. All you need is a microphone and a computer.'

She feels the same pull towards simplicity in the house she is remodelling a short drive away, where she'll have acreage for the rescue horses she plans to add to her menagerie, which includes four dogs, a pair of cats and her pig, Pig. 'My contractors keep trying to sell me all this shit and I'm like, "I'm not going to build a fucking house that's got an outdoor shower,"' Cyrus says, as she walks from her studio to her main house. 'I don't need fancy floors my dogs will ruin.'

Cyrus, who says her taste runs toward the 'janky', is pointedly not about the money. 'People in this industry think, "I just gotta keep getting more money", and I'm like, "What are you getting more money for? You probably couldn't even spend it all in this lifetime." People get more famous, so that they can make their brand more famous, so that they can sell more shit, so that they can make more money. It's a never-ending cycle. Getting more money, having more hits, being the lead in a movie – those things might stimulate you, but they don't make you happy. I've experienced it all already, and I'm telling you first-hand, it doesn't.'

'More money, more hits, being the lead in a movie – those things might stimulate you, but they don't make you happy'

As she opens her front door, Cyrus's dogs circle around her ankles, barking excitedly. Like her studio, her home is hospitable and unaffected – there is nothing to suggest global-superstar celebrity. There is, however, a 5ft embellished bong and a dildo covered in pink and red puffballs (art projects of Cyrus's). 'The bong works,' she emphasises.

Wearing a white, ribbed tank and denim dungarees, with her hair in a tight topknot, Cyrus plops on to her living-room couch, her chihuahua-dachshund, Bean, jumping on her lap. As Bean begins idly licking her fingertips, Cyrus expounds upon her developing world view, one not so far removed from the values she was taught as a child in Franklin, Tennessee, as the daughter of country singer Billy Ray Cyrus and mother Tish. While they and their combined six children were all, as Billy Ray has said, 'born entertainers', the kids were also schooled to be grateful and gracious in the face of success and fame.

She sweeps an arm wide and acknowledges that given her modest needs and earnings from childhood, she never need work again. 'It's more than I deserve,' she says, with humility. 'The question is, what am I going to do with it? I don't want to just sit and hoard it or chase more.' She laughs at the notion of aiming to be a product spokeswoman, the de facto route of the comely pop star. 'I'm probably never going to be the face of a traditional beauty company unless they want a weed-smoking, liberal-ass freak. But my dream was never to sell lip gloss; my dream is to save the world.'

After years of shedding her parents' more hard-set, southern Christian points of view ('My parents took the Bible *very* literally'), Cyrus's nascent social activism tipped into overdrive while attending yet another awards ceremony and watching oblivious multimillionaires drive their limos past car parks filled with homeless youth. Then, in December 2014, transgender teen Leelah Alcorn committed suicide and Cyrus said, 'enough'. In response, she launched The Happy Hippie Foundation in May, an organisation charged with creating awareness around at-risk and LGBT teens and homeless youth.

Cyrus says she feels a kinship with kids who have been marginalised by difference; who have been cast aside for not conforming. She believes that, had the vagaries of her life been a bit different, it could be her sleeping alone and unseen under a bridge: 'A lot of us are born into some shit, you know what I mean?

'Lately, I've been talking a lot about my being gender fluid and gender neutral, and some people snarl at that. They want to judge me,' she says plainly. 'People need more conventional role models, I guess. But I just don't care to be that person.'

Intuitive and very much exposed, Cyrus is not oblivious to the public criticism, but she won't allow the jabs and put-downs to stick. She's not interested in being shoved into a cage, gilded or not. She believes women should come in every shape, size, colour, age, identity, and appetite, not just the 'standard that makes girls feel really horrible'.

'When you look at retouched, perfect photos, you feel like shit,' Cyrus argues. 'They lighten black girls' skin; they smooth out wrinkles. Even I get stuck on Instagram wondering, "Why don't *I* look like that?" It's a total bummer.' Cyrus exhales forcefully. 'It's crazy what people have decided we're all supposed to be.'

This is why, whenever she can, Cyrus deliberately upends the status quo, growing out her armpit hair; taking selfies looking rough and real; calling out photographers who retouch her into someone she doesn't recognise. Cyrus knows she is a work in progress, which, to her, is the joy of life. By intimately sharing the bumps and battles of her journey, she gives permission for other girls to embrace whomever they decide to become, and to find happiness there, not in the reflection of a manufactured culture that looks nothing like them.

'Look at who I was five years ago,' Cyrus says, her deep voice rising a notch. 'Fuck, two months ago; I'm different even from then. If I ever have kids, I don't want to feel behind. Politically and spiritually, we have to always be learning and evolving. I don't ▶

This page: Sweater (with collar and cuffs), Marc Jacobs; earrings (just seen), House of Lavande Vintage

Previous page, left: top, Marc Jacobs; bra, Araks; safety pin-style earring, Ileana Makri; drop earrings, Jacob & Co; stud earring, Miley's own

Previous page, right: black-and-white sweater, Marc Jacobs; black briefs, Eres; black tights, Wolford; earrings, Buccellati

think people do that enough. They just get so comfortable.' And if Cyrus's latest incarnation as activist makes large swathes of the population uncomfortable, so be it. 'It's easier to stay in a box, put on whatever clothes someone told us we should wear. We're programmed. We worry about labels. I guarantee you that even people who have got a stick up their ass know deep down it would feel *so* good to run around naked, and to genuinely not care about what people think.'

Here, too, is something other megastars of the landscape sorely lack – the in-on-the-joke perspective a sense of humour brings, especially when it comes to oneself. Taylor Swift's *Bad Blood* video is mentioned. 'I don't get the violence-revenge thing,' Cyrus shrugs. 'That's supposed to be a good example? And I'm a bad role model because I'm running around with my titties out? I'm not sure how titties are worse than guns.'

At a young age, Cyrus seems to have figured out a truth that eludes not only her peers, but most humans: that the life we've been granted is amusing. So, you know, maybe enjoy it already. 'On my tour with the tongue slide and all that, I was just poking fun at myself,' she explains of last year's *Bangerz* show and cartoon-sexualised MTV Video Music Awards (VMAs) performance that launched a thousand shaming editorials. 'I'm just saying, "I'm not going to conform to your shit."' She smiles. 'It's really no deeper than that.'

Miley Cyrus was playing a pop star long before she was Miley Cyrus playing a pop star. Her nearly five-year run as Hannah Montana on Disney's titular billion-dollar franchise had her done up in day drag prior to her adult teeth growing in. 'From the time I was 11, it was, "You're a pop star! That means you have to be blonde, and you have to have long hair, and you have to put on some glittery tight thing." Meanwhile, I'm this fragile little girl playing a 16-year-old in a wig and a ton of make-up. It was like *Toddlers & Tiaras*. I had fucking flippers.'

The meta-ness of her life is not lost on Cyrus: 'I was told for so long what a girl is supposed to be from being on that show. I was made to look like someone that I wasn't, which probably caused some body dysmorphia because I had been made pretty every day for so long, and then when I wasn't on that show, it was like, "Who the fuck am I?"'

Cyrus worked 12-hour stints for her entire teen life. She was schooled on set. She left so infrequently, her mother suggested bringing in therapy lights for seasonal affective disorder. 'Every morning, I was getting coffee jammed down my throat to wake me up. I just had to keep going, be tough, be strong. Everything happened to me on that set.' (Including getting her period at age 15, while wearing white jeans. 'It was so embarrassing, but I couldn't leave. I was crying, begging my mom, "You're going to have to put the tampon in. I have to be on set."')

Her childhood not only instilled an incomparable work ethic, but it also taught her that complaining has no place in a charmed life. These days, she may wear disco-ball nipple pasties, or sit in a pizza box wearing a pink onesie, or get high and spout a bunch of trippy philosophy, but one thing Cyrus will never do is moan. ('How could I ever complain? My pet peeve is laziness.') Even so, there were consequences after becoming one of the wealthiest and most recognised child stars of all time.

'I would have anxiety attacks,' Cyrus confides. 'I'd get hot flashes, feel like I was about to pass out or throw up.' She recalls one meeting where she felt so overcome, she faked a family emergency so she could exit the building before losing consciousness. 'As soon as I got in my car, I passed out,' she reveals.

Cyrus had a similar attack in Haiti, where she blacked out in a crowd. 'It would happen a lot before shows, and I'd have to cancel. Then the anxiety started coming from anxiety. I would be with my friends, thinking, "I should be having so much fun." You get in this hole that seems like you're never going to be able to get out of.'

A few years back, Cyrus found a therapist. Now when anxiety hits, she can diffuse it. When she is with her friends, she feels genuine joy, never more so than when she is making music or art, free of any commercial concerns. 'Now I make it because I like it, and then I put it out to the public because there are some people out there who like it, too,' she says of her newly streamlined life.

Her latest album, *Miley Cyrus & Her Dead Petz*, is a clever, radical, pointedly uncommercial departure from her previous efforts – and one she released, free of charge, at the end of the VMAs, which she hosted in August. (If RCA Records wasn't down with the gratis plan, she was prepared to buy herself out of the label.)

'Miley's not driven by dollars,' explains her manager, Adam Leber, an industry veteran who has also worked with Britney Spears and Avril Lavigne. 'She makes her own path. Once upon a time, that's what most artists did. Now people like Miley are few and far between.' Leber acknowledges that there is an erroneous public perception of Cyrus but says that once people understand she's coming from a well of empathy and curiosity, that perception inevitably changes. 'Miley could have made a really easy record with a bunch of super-producers, but she didn't. She made something authentic.'

> 'There's nothing left to catch me doing. You want to hack my email so you can find nude pictures? I'll just put them up'

During dinner at Soho House, Cyrus says she's getting an avocado tattoo tomorrow, to celebrate her new love affair with the fruit. She acquires tattoos (she's lost count) the way most women colour their hair: when the spirit moves her. And that's the way Cyrus lives her current life, in an amiable state of id, shameless but sweet, her heart resolutely in the rightest of places.

She mentions Caitlyn Jenner, who is a friend. 'We've talked a lot about how you can never make every single person happy,' says Cyrus. 'We always laugh about people saying she transitioned to be famous, which is crazy. Caitlyn has to tell her story, because if she doesn't, everyone else is going to tell it for her. If she tells her story, then there's no more reach for it. I'm at the same point in my career. I don't really stress too much about being out there. There's nothing left to catch me doing. You want to hack my email so you can find my nude pictures? I'll just fucking put them up.'

Cyrus says she has loved both men and women, that she 'hates the word bisexual,' that before she went public with her carnal omnivorousness, when she was out with women the tabloids largely ignored her, which Cyrus found hilarious and sexist at the same time: 'Like when I introduced Joan Jett into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and I said, "The reason I'm here tonight is because I want to fuck Joan," everyone laughed, because they thought it was a joke.' It wasn't. (She calls rumoured girlfriend model Stella Maxwell one of her best friends.) 'There is so much sexism, ageism, you name it. ▶

Bra, Araks; tights, Wolford; safety pin-style earring, Ileana Makri; drop earrings, House of Lavande Vintage; stud earring, Miley's own

'There's so much sexism, ageism, you name it. Kendrick Lamar sings about LSD and he's cool. I do it and I'm a druggie whore'

Kendrick Lamar sings about LSD and he's cool. I do it and I'm a druggie whore.'

For her part, Jett calls Cyrus a 'kindred spirit'. 'Miley doesn't seem beholden to any entity but her own self,' observes Jett. Of the haters, she notes: 'There will always be people who don't get it and get nasty about it. Miley seems fearless, which gives the people who look to her strength.' She speculates that Cyrus could even end up in politics.

After paying the dinner tab, Cyrus drives around Hollywood. She used to avoid driving because of her panic attacks. 'Now, I live for it. At night, I will cruise to Malibu just to think.'

She cues tracks from her latest album: a love song to an old girlfriend, 'which shouldn't be such a crazy thing'; then another she wrote after her beloved dog Floyd died. 'I'm singing, "I'm alive but I'm a liar," and it's about how we all just do our best to sing along to something that makes us feel less afraid.'

Cyrus wrote every song, many out of hotel rooms, mic plugged into her laptop. She cues a third: 'This one I did in Australia, because my ex [actor Liam Hemsworth] is from there, so I was heavily inspired.' The lyrics to her next track, *Bang Me Box*, are unabashedly dirty, but sly – a girl-power anthem that doesn't beat around the, ahem, bush. 'I'm at a place now where I just say everything,' she admits proudly. 'Most of the time, when people ask me for an autograph, they don't comment on my show or my music. They say, "Thank you for what you stand up for."'

Cyrus rounds a corner, both hands comfortably on the wheel. 'And that's why I continue to not give a fuck.' She grins into the dark. 'For all those other cool rebels out there.' ■

This page: sweater, Marc Jacobs; tights, Wolford; safety pin-style earring, Ileana Makri; drop earrings, House of Lavande Vintage; stud earring, Miley's own

Opposite page: black dress, Marc Jacobs; black tights, Wolford; earrings, House of Lavande Vintage

Hair by Andy Lecompte at The Wall Group for Wella Professionals. Make-up by Sabrina Bedrani at Tracey Mattingly for Dior Beauty. Nails by Brittni Rae at Nailing Hollywood for Sephora Formula X/The System. Set design by Andy Henbest at Frank Reps